Fictional World of Khuswant Singh: A Depiction of Social History

An Outline of the Proposed Research Work to be Submitted to

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Introduction: The proposed Problem of the present research is to examine "Fictional World of Khuswant Singh: A Depiction of Social History."

As a matter of fact, Khuswant Singh is one of the established writers in Indian Literature in English. He has covered the social, political, cultural and ethical discourses in his fictional world with the authentic and prominent voice. Therefore, he has come forward as a writer with difference in contemporary literature in English.

Fictional world of Khuswant Singh reveals social realism, patriotism, depiction of history and human relationships. It also confirms him as the notable writer of his generation. His writings demonstrate indisputably that the Indian literature has come to acquire a distinct identity of its own. He has a magical gift for creating the familiar into the wonderful, by focusing in detail approaches to objects, people and relationship. His literature attests irony, satire, cynicism, which are seen and touched. It also tempted to bear witness to history and included mythic, legendry themes that resonate in India's public life. As a writer, he is utterly fearless. No contemporary topic is out of bounds, delightfully unexpected, always, is his angle of attack. Consequently, he succeeds to develop his own original style and technique and achieved the world class recognition.

An Overview of the Relevant Literature:

Khuswant Singh's novels are the intellectual food to the lovers of literature. The following novels are taken for the proposed research work.

Train to Pakistan

Train to Pakistan takes place in the imaginary town of Mano Majra which was near the partition. Many border towns like this had great religious diversity. As Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs living side by side. The British took no account of these towns. The violence erupted in them. The author contrary shows Mano Majras maintaining its order given its relative isolation. However Mano Majra has a train station which becomes the centre for the conflict.

The novel begins with the murder and robbery of Lala Ramlal, the only Hindu family in the town. The murderous gang as led by Malli, who were looking for their old gang member Juggut Singh. A Sikh strongly built up and with the bad reputation. Jaggu as making love with his girlfriend Nooran the daughter of town's Mullah during dacoit by the gang at the same time Iqbal Singh an ethnic Sikh arrived in the town.

Malli and the gang try to pin the crime on Jaggu. Iqbal and Jaggu get arrested due to suspicion. The regional magistrate Hukumchand orders the arrest. While they are in the prison, however conflict starts to rise when a train full of Muslim corpses is brought to town and burned by the soldiers. A group of soldiers come to town to evacuate the Muslim half of the town to Pakistan. In it Nooran departs while Jaggu in jail.

After the evacuation of Muslims a band of local Sikhs come to Mano Majra to whip up anti Muslim sentiments and sabotage the train that as taking the Muslims to Pakistan. Iqbal and Jaggu are released to stop the killing. Despite the otherwise reputation Jaggu tries to stop the killing.

Britishers withdrew from India after the partition. Ten million people crossed during partition. The religious and ethnic hatred caused the killing of two million people the same is the theme for The Train to Pakistan.

I shall not hear the Nightingale

I shall not hear the Nightingale is set in Amritsar in 1942 during the height of India's freedom struggle. It explores the impact of the freedom movement on the family of magistrate Buta Singh a loyal servant of the British Raj.

Without his Knowledge his son Sher Singh becomes the leader of a group of anti British revolutionaries. The son get arrested. He could be sentenced to death if he is proved guilty of treason. The English Deputy Commissioner Jhon Tyalor, offers the son two alternatives either to betray his comrades and save his life or else being hanged.

The novel explores a rather despicable side of India's history that of a servile Indian government servant in the British regime. Ho unbelievable the Indian civil servants of that time would degrade themselves stopping short of nothing to be in the good books of the British. The novel depicts the British themselves as bemused by such Indians at their back and call and couldn't for their life figure out why the Indians behave with such servility Buta Singh typify those Indians.

The end of the novel is dominated by the mother Sabhrai trying to save her family from falling apart. The characters of Champak and Madanlal are unanticipated and interesting. They are realistic to the type.

Delhi: A Novel

Delhi: A Novel is the collection of ten tales starts at 1265 A.D. till 1985 A.D. It covers all the major incidents that shaped Delhi and gave the present identity. The narrator of book is an old reprobate who loves Delhi as much as he loves hermaphrodite prostitute Bhagmati. The study starts with this middle aged man landing in Delhi and accommodating himself in the city. After wandering some days he takes the ob of a royal tourist guide as he is well acquainted to the city. His first account when he takes an American girl on a round trip of city suggests that he is anything but a gentleman. Flirting and eve-teasing are his forte and he enjoys being in the company of woman Bhagmati enters and he finds a hugely satisfied bed partner. The narrator takes Bhagmati to Jahaz Mahal, where on inscribed stone catches his eye and thus starts the real history of Delhi.

Delhi was ruled by Sultan Ghiasuddin Balban. In 1625 .D. The narrator is a clerk called Musaddi Lal who tells his journey from child marriage to old age. In the process he narrates the influence of Hazrat Nizamuddin, the wwrath of Ammer Khusraoo and the change in the emperor from Balban to Khiljis. The chapter marks the building of Mughal Empire in Delhi. The next tale describes the adventure of Taimur in Delhi and consolidation of Mughals in Delhi.

The next stretches from the death of Jahangir to the rule of Shah Jahan to Aurangzeb's rule. The narrator for this chapter is now an untouchable Sikh.

Next chapter contains Aurangzeb's heart wrenching history, Nadir Shah's invasion and one year rue over Delhi, erotic life history of an Agra based Shyayar in whose lifetime Delhi is ruled by Abadli, Maratha, Jat, Sikhs and finally Ghulam Quadir.

Every rule and the city comes one step closer of being a desert. Such is the havoc of those rulers.

The chapter titled 1857 marks the beginning of British imperialistic impact on Delhi and deterioration of last Mughal emperor Bahadur Shaha Zafar and his imprisonment with him Delhi sees the last Mughal emperor.

Forthcoming chapter brings ho Delhi is built during British Raj in 1900. The narrator in this chapter is a builder, who becomes the dignitary after many viceroys come. The second last chapter describes Indian independence struggle, partition and Gandhiji's shootout. Narrator here is a refugee from Pakistan who joins the fundamentalist group in Delhi and observes every action of Gandhiji and other dignitaries. In the last episode the riots after Indira Gandhi's murder in 1984 which shook Delhi concludes. The novel is the social history from 1225 A.D. to 1984 A.D. is depicted with different points of view.

The Company of Women

Company of Women presents Mohan Kumar as the protagonist of the novel. He is very rich and with a weakness-women. He is crazy about them and is ready to spend lavishly on them to have their company. It all starts when he is a student in U.S. and has an affair. His life takes a new turn after he is divorced and is left alone without a woman in his life to share his bed. Khuswant Singh is well known for his bold portrayal of truth. He has succinctly and beautifully said that what men like Mohan Kumar can and will do if given a chance. However he still shows the pitfalls of all these by ending Mohan's life due to the deadly onslaught of AIDS which let him to commit suicide, lets the society and his family know about the truth of his somewhat clandestine affairs.

Like all other books by Khuswant Singh it is on a subject that may seem very farfetched from reality, but is instead at the heart of the society. The language is clear, precise and to the point. He doesn't drag things for too long and keeps his narrative fast paced. The end does seem to be very predictable but it still comes as an abrupt surprise.

The Sunset Club

The Sunset Club is the novel written at the age of 95 by Khuswant Sing. He takes the reader through 12 months starts on 26th January 2009 and ends a year late on the Indian Republic Day in 2010. It is set in New Delhi has three characters in the 'sunset' days of their lives. These are a Punjabi Brahimin Hindu erudite-Preetam Sharma, a Muslim businessman Nawab Barkatullah Baig Dehlvi and a Sikh Boota Singh one of the writer's image. Baig and Sharma are also based on the actual friends of the author.

The book is the collection of literary, political, historical, culyural, religious and philosophicl anecdotes. Here Singh is frank, bold, candid and honest.

The three men , escorted by their servants, have been meeting almost every evening for four decades at Lodhi garden where they sit for a chat. The discussions include Astrology, Asstronomy, Kurukshetra and its significance in Mahabharta, commonality between Hinduism and Sikhism and Musliminism and topical political happenings.

The space fillers in the novel are old age ailments that commonly riddle the body, basically digestive system and other organs. His character Boota reveals in relating these in 'Geny' details. Readers come across not just his views on every subject but anecdotes related to these which he has been privy to in his lifetime.

In the end both Baig and Sharma passes away. The left alone Boot Singh shakes away his despondency and on Republic Day of 2010 he goes to Lodhi Garden as if to say. Life must go on and perhaps this is what his friends would have liked him to do.

Maharaja in Denims

Hari Sandhu is the protagonist. Hari discovers that he is not only the aristocratic child but the reincarnation of Sher-E-Punjab Maharaja Ranjit Sing. The book goes through the various stages of his life. Hari sees his elder brother die right before his eyes in car crash. He becomes showing disinterest in all the things he once pursued with great care he is restored to his original self where he enjoyed driving expensive SUVs, dating the hottest girls and getting wherever he wanted. All this continue, until suddenly flashes of a distant past start disrupting his parent. He starts to find answers that trace his behaviour and sudden outburst to that of one of Punjab's greatest ruler. The self discovery and virtual transcending into different eras and feeling of being the part of riots, massacres and fiery battles that broke into several shattered pieces.

The Maharaja's essence and passion seem to be flooding into him and he became sensitive to the reality. He involves from a teenagers with lustful thoughts into a man of understanding the man who knows the meaning of love and protecting whom he value.

The book shows ho embracing past can actually strengthen the foundation of your present. The pain and failure are the signs of ongoing struggle that gives the meaning to your life. The book is full of beautiful outburst of passionate love, heart breaking scenario and elements of surprise.

Objectives of the Research

The objectives are:

1. To evaluate and examine the fictional world of Khuswant Singh
2. To highlight the socio-cultural aspects.
3. To analyze and interpret major thematic concerns.
4. To explore social realism.
5. To cast light on the contemporary society.
6. To assess the seeds of historic events.
7. To explore the journey of self-discovery.

Hypothesis of the Research:

Khuswant Singh's fictional world is an authentic organ of Indian society and culture. He has attested in his literary world. His novels are the best piece of socio-cultural critique, where he casts light on the human sense and sensibilities. His attitude of social realism puts him a different writer from his contemporaries. Apart from this, the socio-cultural history also shapes his literary torrents.

Research Methodology:

On the whole, the proposed research work is analytical and interpretative in nature. It mostly deals with the novels of Khuswant Sing. It would depend upon the textual analysis of primary and secondary sources having references to the novelist's

works, documents, reviews in journal, essays, and magazines, reports, memoranda, letters and interviews.

The methodology advocated by the latest MLA handbook will be followed for the purpose of document, endnotes, quotations; bibliography etc will be used by the researcher.

Relevance to the Society:

The present research attempt will be useful and informative for the students, researchers and teachers besides the general reading of Khuswant Sing. It will be also useful to understand socio-cultural circumstances, subsequently; it helps readers and scholars to explore the socio-cultural vision of the Indians.

Scope of Research:

The proposed research work will help the researchers in Humanities Social Sciences under the dynamics of socio-cultural critique on contemporary India. It has in itself its own significance as a study in literature and literary criticism. It will also provide certain literary perceptions of the novelist in the context of Indian socio-culture.

Limitations of the Research Work:

The proposed research work is limited to explore the fictional world of Khuswant Singh in the light of socio-cultural vision. Hence, it does not require any field work. The original collections of the writer, his interviews and critical literature about the novels are adequate for the present work.

The Tentative Chapter Scheme:

The tentative chapter scheme for the research is as follows:

1. Chapter One : Introduction
2. Chapter Two : Early Phase
3. Chapter Three: Middle Phase
4. Chapter Four: Last Phase
5. Chapter Five: Conclusion

Bibliography

Webliography

The proposed study will be completed within two years. It will be worked as:

- Collection of Research Material
- Intensive Reading
- Intensive Writing
- Submission of Thesis

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